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DIANA HEARS

LUCENING UP ... Clare Boothe Luce, in town on the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, usually does Civilized Little Dinners. (You know: Six or eight at the Watergate. White-gloved waiters. No Chatter, just Conversation.) So the sixty-odd who trotted into the Sulgrave Club to honor Italian Ambassador Rinaldo Petrignani at her dinner for him were very keen to check each other out *en masse*. No disappointments, darlings. Sandra Day O'Connor wore something white and draped and classical, like Justice on a monument. Faith Ryan Whittlesey, soon off to Switzerland as ambassador, was squiored by a divinely sinister-looking man with a black eye-patch. (He turned out to be the perfectly respectable Dr. Richard Rhan, a big noise with the US Chamber of Commerce.) John Warner dashed in fresh from a debate with Carl Sagan at GW — "I couldn't get a word in edgewise" — stuffing his inside breast pocket with typed schedule cards, which proved that this was the last of his 22 appointments for the day. ("I have my staff cut the corners rounded on each card. Otherwise, you can't get 'em in and out your pocket.") Sen. Malcolm Wallop, who used to squire the hostess around, stylishly presented his bride, French, to her. (It went off beautifully. Sometimes he says, "I'd like you to meet my wife, French," and no-class people say "French, eh? Avez-vous un nom, Madame Wallop?") Ed Meese was Clare's date. (Ursula Meese was off in gay Paree observing UNESCO.) CIA director Bill Casey was sans Sophia, who'd broken her shoulder at Kay Graham's party — only New York can heal her — so he balanced Maureen Reagan, whose Dennis is off in California. Alexandra de Borchgrave's husband, Times editor Arnaud, skipped out before the salmon mousse to do some Severe Hands-On Editing. But the crowd swelled. In poured the Ed Feulners, the Richard Lugars, the Dan Boorstins — he's

Librarian of Congress — the Bob Charleses — she's the Oatsie you love to read about — FBler Bill Webster, and a *melange* of antique admirals, *grandes dames*, Italian countesses, Luces, Newporters, and the man who taught Clare to shoot 40 years ago. Richard Burt pointedly remarked to John Warner that his nomination as Ambassador to West Germany hadn't gone before the Senate yet; mate Gahl Hodges, who's still the White House Social Secretary, wondered how she should learn German. Superbanker Joe Allbritton confessed that he'd quit running. (In the literal sense, anyhow.) At table, it was Conversation and Chat. Reagan mustn't allow himself to be defeated on the Nicaraguan vote! (That from Rep. Henry Hyde.) Is Michael Deaver buried at Bitburg? Is There Life After Washington? Are modern Romans like ancient Romans? What of Sex and the Single Senator? Roger Mudd reminisced about John Warner's and his shared Washington and Lee youth. (Roger was "Boomer," John was "Duke," and they were a janitor and hod-carrier respectively.) Charity buffs chewed over which ghastly disease is best. (Unfortunately, Dr. Robert Gallo, the Cancer Man, had lost his invitation and didn't show.) During the toasts, Clare credited Petrignani, a silky Roman she'd known since the '50s, with 3,000 years of civilization. And he toasted all her accomplishments — playwright, journalist, congresswoman, ambassador — as though she'd polished them off in a couple of years. All were wreathed in smiles as they rose for coffee. Promptly at 11, the A-List turned into a pumpkin, which rolled downstairs, bobbed into its limo, and trundled home to a comfy bed. This, darlings, is Washington.